

Exploring Hygiene and Motivational Drivers of Employee Career Commitment in Shanghai's Pet Retail Sector

Wang Kehui¹ , Ang Hong Loong^{2*} 

¹Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Email: wangkehui1128@gmail.com

²Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Jalan UMS, 88400 Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, Malaysia

Email: angkingsley@ums.edu.my

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR (*):

Ang Hong Loong
(angkingsley@ums.edu.my)

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the impact of hygiene and motivator factors on career commitment among workers in the pet retail industry in Shanghai. Consistent with Herzberg (1959) Two-Factor Theory, three hygiene factors, payment, working conditions, and working relationships, and one motivational factor, training and development, were tested for their direct effect on career commitment. The sample consisted of 138 employees from pet shops in Shanghai and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used as the analytic approach. Results are that pay, working conditions, and training and development significantly increase career commitment, while working relationships are less influential. The importance of equitable compensation, good working conditions, and ongoing employee development as well as their relationship to a long-term commitment is reinforced by the findings. Practically, the findings of this study can support managers and policy makers in the development of effective motivation programs that increase employee commitment and will assist in improving turnover rates within the growing pet retail industry.

Contribution/Originality: This study contributes to existing literature by applying Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory to analyze the influence of hygiene and motivational factors in the career commitment of employees within Shanghai's pet retail sector. It is also one of the very few to empirically study employee motivation in relation to the new pet economy in China.

1. Introduction

China's pet economy is projected to reach 592.8 billion yuan (\$83.19 billion) by 2023, following a compound growth rate of 20.2 percent from 2015 to 2020 (China International Import Expo Bureau, 2024). The economic detraction and dampened demand caused by the onset of COVID-19 resulted in slower growth in the pet population

between 2020 and 2022, as those interested in pets were less willing to engage with the market (Chen, 2025). Despite this slower period, the pet economy's market scale reached CNY 279.3 billion in 2023, a 3.2% increase from 2022. This growth was notably driven by the cat segment, which expanded by 6%, significantly outpacing the dog segment's growth of 0.9% (Chen, 2025). In 2023, China had 51.75 million pet dogs (1.1% more than in 2022) and 69.8 million pet cats (6.8% more than in 2022) (Pet Industry in China, 2023). On a global scale the urban dog and cat market in China was more than RMB 300.2 billion in 202 both cities saw a continuous growth of the market in 2023, and according to recent data the market has continued to grow in 2024 by 7.5%.

Overall, the Chinese pet industry is experiencing robust growth, with the market size expected to increase from RMB 3.29 trillion to RMB 4.10 trillion over the next three years (Lu & Li, 2025). The number of pet dogs and cats in China reached 51.75 million and 69.8 million, respectively, in 2023, underscoring the market's potential (Sun et al., 2025). This suggests that China's pet market is poised for significant expansion. But employee commitment is a problem; there are feelings of discontent and human resource management is not well developed in the industry (Wang et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2022). The purpose of the research is to investigate the impact of motivational elements in determining career commitment among pet-shop workers in Shanghai, as it is of high relevance to develop more effective strategies to manage workers in this upcoming field. As shown in Table 1, Shanghai is among the top ten cities across China with the largest amount of pet shops. This information is relevant to understand the reasons for choosing Shanghai as the place of study.

Table 1: Top 10 Provinces of Pet Shops in China

Province	Number (unit)	Province	Number (unit)
Guang Dong	11930	Liao Ning	6760
Jiang Su	11634	He Nan	6638
Shan Dong	8530	He Bei	6270
Si Chuan	7395	An Hui	4392
Zhe Jiang	7294	Hu Bei	3867

Source: Pet Industry in China (2023)

Human resources represent one of the largest challenges to the pet shop industry in Shanghai. This dissatisfaction has led to high employee turnover and low career commitment, with workers not valuing their jobs due to low pay and poor working environments, lack of career growth and poor relationships between workers and supervisors (Huang, et al., 2018; Wu, et al, 2023). While rising disposable incomes and evolving social beliefs in companion animals has expanded the pet retail industry, this area of industry is fragmented and lacks good management regarding employee morale and development, which would be crucial to its overall success and competitiveness (Yang, 2023).

The worker is highly dependent regarding satisfaction in this sector on critical motivational factors of fair compensation, supportive working conditions, adequate training and development, and positive workplace relationships (Jalaman & Encarnacion, 2014; Hidayah et al., 2014). Lack of planned motivation and systematic approaches to human resource management have resulted in low morale and high turnover rate in pet shops in Shanghai (Ang et al., 2024).

Employee satisfaction has been found to be very important for team performance and overall organizational performance (Rizwan et al., 2012; Kabir & Parvin, 2011). Poor wages, lack of opportunities for advancement and challenging working conditions decrease worker satisfaction, productivity, and commitment. Career commitment is characterized as an individual's dependent orientation toward one's work and long-term professional objectives. It has been identified as essential in the issue of workforce stability. Indeed, high commitment ties to higher levels of persistence and performance and low levels of dissatisfaction are linked with engagement and retention from the organization (Puah & Ananthram, 2006; Ang et al., 2024; Petrova et al., 2020).

This research utilized Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory as a theoretical base. In contrast to complements such as motivators (e.g. achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth) and hygiene factors (pay, policy and administration; supervision; relationship with supervisors; working conditions; interpersonal relations; and relationship with subordinates) (Herzberg, 1959; Robertson, 2016). This model is also helpful to reflect on what this means in terms of hygiene factors, motivation, and career commitment for the workers participating in Shanghai's pet retail industry. Drawing from the scarce studies on workforce motivation in this industry, the current study provides a practical contribution creating a bridge to increase employees' engagement whilst leading towards a more sustainable growth of the pet retail industry.

1.1. Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the impact of hygiene and motivational factors on career commitment among employees within Shanghai's pet retail industry, based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Specifically, it aims to identify the hygiene factors, which are related to payment, working conditions and relationship at work, that can be determinant for the level of career commitment showed by the employees as well as to understand the role that the motivational factor among which stands training and development play in ensuring higher long-term engagement and loyalty of the employees. Furthermore, the study is also interested in exploring the relative importance of these hygiene and motivational factors in predicting career commitment, thus generating important empirical insights pertaining to the motivational dynamics of the emerging pet retail industry. The results are also intended to inform practical needs of managers and policy makers in creating important human resource management practices that, in seeking to reduce turnover, strengthen workforce stability, and increase employee motivation, are beneficial for the government, the employer and the employee. In line with the study, the following hypotheses are established testing the direct link of hygiene and motivation factors with employee career commitment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theory

In 1959, the definition of motivation was enriched by Frederick Herzberg, American psychologist, who developed the motivation-hygiene two-factor theory that came to be a cornerstone of motivation research (Robertson, 2016). In his study of the 1,844 cases, Herzberg found employees' needs were not met with poor working conditions, poor management policies, low wages, low status, and poor interpersonal relationships as reasons that caused employees to be dissatisfied and to cultivate an attitude of dissatisfaction toward their work (Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). On the other hand,

increases in such aspects were related to higher levels of overall satisfaction or a less negative work environment. In addition, further research on a sample of 1,753 cases, showed that job saving, productivity, personal development, performance, job challenge, and work motivation significantly enhanced motivation and efficiency at work (Vijayakumar & Saxena, 2015). In the absence of these motivational components there was employee de-motivation and lower productivity (Mardanov, 2021).

Herzberg (1959) identified motivational factors as those that are inherent in the job, while he labelled hygiene factors as those from outside the job. He also observed that some factors may overlap. One such example is when appreciation acts as a motivator in its presence and as a hygiene factor in its absence because the absence does not cause dissatisfaction. Likewise, pay is usually a hygiene factor, but under some conditions can function as a motivator when it is seen as equitable and contingent on performance (Xu et al., 2023). Herzberg (1959) asserts that while hygiene factors are the minimal conditions that will maintain, but not cause, dissatisfaction, motivational factors are the conditions under which people will be satisfied. Thus, organizations should use both factors strategically to construct efficient motivation systems that will increase both employees' engagement as well as organizational results (Herzberg, 1959; Robertson, 2016).

The theoretical foundation of the present study is Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which describes how motivation and hygiene factors contribute to employee attitudes and outcomes in work experience (Herzberg et al., 1959). This study categorizes factors such as payment, working conditions and working relationships as hygiene factors, as they do not lead to dissatisfaction but to a lack of it, while training and development were regarded as motivators supposed to produce satisfaction and long-term career commitment. Unequal pay, danger-free conditions and desirable relationships eliminate the propensity for dissatisfaction and will result in static and stability in the employment relationship, although needs that are more motivational in nature, such as opportunities for skill development, or growth opportunities, will be the primary drivers in directing employees toward greater career commitment (Xu et al., 2023). The application of this model to the pet retail industry in Shanghai specifically allows some analysis of these factors in relation to commitment to work, offering some clues as to how managers of pet shops might begin to develop motivational strategies that work to retain and improve the performance of their staff.

2.2. Career Commitment

Career commitment involves an individual's psychological investment, identification, and intensity of commitment to a particular career in their life's work. These are an individuals' professional growth and satisfaction due to personal goal clarity, organizational support, relationship quality, skill development and a feeling of inclusiveness, among other supporting elements (Puah & Ananthram, 2006). This idea developed from the construct of organizational commitment, but began to take form as industrialization, legal change, and evolving work values led to different expectations of job continuity and increased the balance of power during the employment relationship in favour of the worker and the organization. With the increase in frequency and cost of job-hopping, distinctions between one's career and one's organization became more evident to researchers (Blau, 1985).

Research has consistently found that career commitment has a strong positive relationship with employee performance and satisfaction. More career committed employees are expected to experience their work as more meaningful and to be intrinsically motivated by it. For instance, [Koo et al. \(2020\)](#) have shown that affective commitment positively influences satisfaction among public employees in South Korea, whereas [Coetzee and Schreuder \(2011\)](#) ascertained that career- committed employees are more likely to set clear career goals, to engage in more advancement behaviour and remain persist in achieving their career goals. Similarly, [Tang et al. \(2019\)](#) found that working in high-tech industries that are highly career- committed increases job satisfaction and innovative and proactive behaviours among workers in China. This emphasizes the point of the advantage for both individual and organization if one's career commitment is strengthened.

[Herzberg et al. \(1959\)](#) suggested that hygiene factors, such as equitable company policies, result in the absence of dissatisfaction and prevent disengagement. Factors like payment, working conditions and interpersonal relations, which deal with the basic needs of employees and help create a foundation of motivation ([Kabir & Parvin, 2011](#)). Lack of these factors results in employees feeling frustrated, disconnected, and overall uncommitted to their jobs. All these hygiene factors together with determinants like equity, leadership, and promotional opportunities affect job satisfaction, which is an employee's emotional and attitudinal response to work ([Fisher, 2000](#); [Locke, 1969](#); [Jiang et al., 2019](#); [Mulyanti, 2024](#)). Fair remuneration, positive working conditions, and positive human relationships, in addition to reducing dissatisfaction, can strengthen an individual's cognitive and affective connection with their professional occupation and the concomitant commitment to it, thus enhancing organizational performance ([Cao et al., 2022](#)).

2.3. Hygiene Factors

Hygiene factors are aspects of the work environment, which when present will not create satisfaction but can prevent dissatisfaction. These include pay, conditions, and relationships at work. Hygiene factors maintain conditions that deter dissatisfaction because they keep the company stable and equitable ([Herzberg et al., 1959](#)). The commercial pet products industry in Shanghai illustrates how poor compensation, bad working conditions, and weak social ties can lead to high turnover and low levels of career commitment. Satisfying these hygiene factors is critical to staff retention and shifting attitudes workers have about their jobs.

2.3.1. Payment

Payment satisfaction continues to be a key motivating and binding factor among employees. [Smerek and Peterson \(2007\)](#) suggested that payment satisfaction is a multifaceted construct that addresses issues of salary competitiveness, fairness, and clarity in terms of wage determination. In China, base salary payments include most types of compensation except for bonuses and premiums for such things as overtime or hazardous duty pay ([Warner, 2013](#)). The minimum monthly wage for 2023 by region is: Shanghai RMB 2,590, Chengdu RMB 2,320 and Beijing RMB 2,100 ([Pet Industry in China, 2023](#)). Employees not only consider money as monetary security but also a means of expression of value in the organization ([Sweins et al., 2009](#)).

It has been found that clear, contingent-based compensation programs are associated with high levels of satisfaction and commitment. DeVaro et al. (2014) indicate that the subjective value of incentives may have a positive boosting effect on motivation and morale. In line with those findings, Ma et al. (2016) and Alias et al. (2018) found that well-rounded reward systems, which encompass professional growth and work life support, enhance general satisfaction and well-being towards employees. Indeed, while economic rewards are less powerful on well-being as compared to emotional or social support by Dunn et al. (2014), nevertheless fair and just pay becomes an essential strength for the retention of workers in service-based industries such as pet retail.

2.3.2. Working Conditions

A working condition is the environment employees work in, both physically and psychically. Weiss (1967) classified these as either physical (e.g., lighting, ventilation, temperature) or organizational (e.g., health care, insurance). Work that is enriching and satisfying has been shown to increase motivation, productivity, and the probability of retention (Hackman & Oldham, 1975; Mitchell, 1974). Job content, variety of tasks and clarity of role relate directly with employees' sense of purpose and engagement, and safe and comfortable environments relate to less stress and less absenteeism.

It is a well-documented fact that good working environments are associated with better productivity and better impact in terms of psychological welfare. Positive work environments were discovered by Obiekwe and Obibhunun (2019) to be related to increased organizational commitment and lowered employee turnover. Adeshola et al. (2023) highlight the need for a holistic approach to job design and management skills and organizational culture to improve the health outcomes, both physical and mental, of workers. Supportive or high-quality work environments are boasted by effective HR practices, ongoing training, and open communications as well (Kammeyer-Mueller et al., 2009; London & Smither, 1995). Ultimately, employees that perceive favourable work conditions are more likely to have career commitment and commitment to the organizational success of the entity (Mafini, 2016; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996; Humphrey et al., 2007; Lund, 2003; Awadh & Saad, 2013; Sahyoni & Supartha, 2020).

2.3.3. Working Relationships

It encompasses interpersonal relations between employees and between subordinates and superiors. Social relations in the workplace are an indispensable value and are important for job satisfaction, mental health, and performance (Adams, 1963; Erden, 2011). Leader-member exchange and functional team relations are rooted primarily in trust, respect, and good communication (Biggs et al., 2016). In Shanghai's pet industry, this absence of cohesion is one of the reasons there is disengagement and high turnover.

The importance of cooperation and teamwork in achieving satisfaction via camaraderie and positive workplace morale was highlighted in Wu et al. (2023). This culture of support and shared identity has the benefit of enhancing productivity and collaboration. Lambert (2003) also concluded that open lines of communication and favourable employee attitudes engender reduced misconduct in the workplace, and increased levels of satisfaction. In the same line, Bakker and Demerouti (2007) and Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) found that trust and respect encourage cooperation and motivation. Therefore, the greatest strategies to maintain motivation and long-term commitment to a career are encouraging teamwork and keeping communication open.

2.4. Motivational Factor (Training and Development)

Training and development are a strong motivating factor, promoting intrinsic satisfaction and loyalty to a longer tenure position. Training is the process of developing and refining an individual's knowledge, skills, and behaviours to improve organizational and individual performance (Truitt, 2011). If properly structured, training may generate skills associated with enhanced productivity, better products and increased consumer satisfaction for the enterprises (Cherkesova et al., 2016; Malik et al., 2020). This relationship between training opportunities and job satisfaction has been empirically substantiated.

In the UK, Gazioglu and Tansel (2006) observed higher levels of job satisfaction among workers that have had training in comparison to those that have never trained, a fact also confirmed by Tashobya et al. (2022). Brown and Peterson (1993) emphasized the effect of training on performance enhancement and satisfaction; Anwar and Shukur (2015) stressed that training has a positive impact on behaviour modification and engagement. Employees who benefitted from good training programs regarding diversity and leadership, also revealed higher levels of organizational commitment and career satisfaction (Yap et al., 2010).

Given the difficulties in attracting and retaining a skilled workforce within the pet product business in Shanghai, regular opportunities for further training and skills development can be used as measures against the current overall business environment, where employees often lack competence, motivation, and commitment to their job. When individual development is synonymous with company objectives, the overall satisfaction generated by companies is higher, cultivating a working environment that will ultimately give them a competitive advantage.

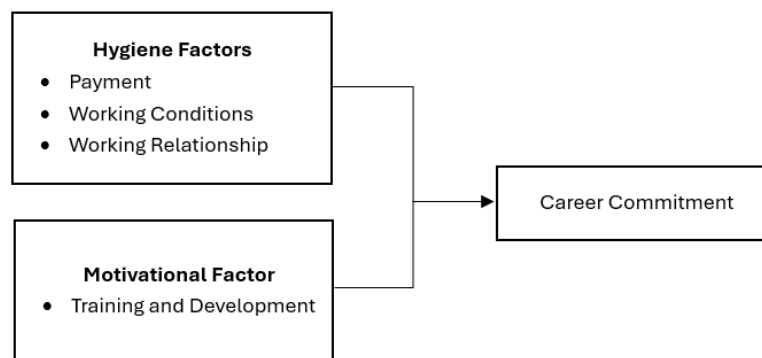
3. Research Methods

The present study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional research design aimed at analyzing and quantifying the relationships among hygiene factors (payment, working conditions, and working relationships) as well as one motivational factor (training and development) and employee career commitment. This quantitative design was considered appropriate as it utilizes statistical methods to empirically test hypotheses, thus providing an objective and general set of findings that can be extended to the population of interest (Lamb, 2017). Given that the data were collected at a specific point in time and focused on employees' perceptions of motivation and commitment from the rapidly growing pet retail industry in Shanghai, the cross-sectional design was deemed appropriate.

As illustrated in Figure 1, the hygiene factors of pay, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships, as well as the motivational factor of training and development, are posited to impact employee career commitment directly. A visual representation of the hypothesized direct effect between hygiene factors, motivational factor, and career commitment is displayed in Figure 1 and it is based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. In Shanghai, the city where this study took place, there are currently 4,285 pets' shops as of 2023 compared with 4,239 in 2022, making Shanghai the number one pet business city in China (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2023).

The study included 138 respondents in total. The size of the sample was established according to [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#) for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) indicating that there should be a minimum of 10 participants per indicator or measurement item. This study consisted of 25 measures, which required a minimum of 100 completion responses, and so the 138 responses to the survey were considered sufficient to meet the statistical requirements as well as allowing generalizability. A mixed of disproportionate stratified and purposive sampling was used as sampling technique. Using purposive sampling, attempts were made to include employees that had relevant experience and experience with the operations of pet retail in the city, and the over-sampling stratified by type of business attempted to cover a range of different districts within the city of Shanghai (for example Pudong, Huangpu, Jing'an, Changning). A complete and updated list of the registered names of pet shops in Shanghai was on top of that available at the database of the [Pet Industry in China's \(2023\)](#), hence, this database served as a sampling frame for determining which pet retail outlets and employees qualified for the study.

Figure 1: Theoretical Framework



Source: [Biggs et al. \(2016\)](#), [Smerek & Peterson \(2007\)](#), [Truitt \(2011\)](#), [Puah & Ananthram \(2006\)](#), [Weiss \(1967\)](#)

Data was collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire divided in five sections that assessed payment, working conditions, working relationships, training and development, and career commitment. All measurement items were taken and modified from well-known scales published in previous studies on payment ([Smerek & Peterson, 2007](#)), working conditions ([Weiss, 1967](#)), working relationships ([Biggs et al., 2016](#)), training and development ([Truitt, 2011](#)) and career commitment ([Puah & Ananthram, 2006](#)). All items are on a five-point Likert scale (1= strongly disagree, 5= strongly agree). A final sample of 15 participants completed the survey in a pilot field-test to assure item clarity and reliability, as well as cultural relevance, before being widely launched. The final survey was then made available both online and in hard copy to increase the response rate. [Table 2](#) provides a list of the measurement items and their sources which were used in the operationalization of each construct in the present analysis.

Statistical analysis was done using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were first examined using IBM SPSS version 26 to assess normality, reliability and validity of the data. Then, to test the hypothesized direct effects between study variables, Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was conducted by means of SmartPLS software. This method was chosen as it is appropriate for predictive or exploratory research, and when working with models that contain latent constructs with several indicators. The measurement model was tested for reliability and

validity (i.e., Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted) and the structural model was examined for path coefficients and p- values through bootstrapping. The study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) as detailed in the Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate section.

Table 2: Measurement Items and Source

Code	Question	Source
Payment		
P1	My salary or pay rate is competitive when compared to similar jobs at other organizations.	Smerek & Peterson (2007)
P2	I am fairly paid for the work I do.	
P3	Salary or pay increment rate is appropriate.	
P4	I understand how my base salary is determined.	
P5	My salary or pay rate is a significant factor in my decision to stay at the company.	
Working Conditions		
WC1	My company provides high-quality working conditions in my workplace (e.g., air conditioner, proper lighting, ventilation, etc.).	Weiss (1967)
WC2	My company's working conditions are pleasant (e.g., well-designed office space, employee amenities, medical healthcare, insurance, etc.).	
WC3	My company provides fringe benefits to the employees.	
Training and Development		
T1	I receive updated training which is required for my position.	Truitt (2011)
T2	The current training provided adequately meets my professional needs.	
T3	My company provides me with the opportunity to improve my skills.	
T4	I am satisfied with the training and development provided by the company.	
Working Relationship		
WR1	All co-workers are easy to work with.	Biggs, Swailes & Baker (2016)
WR2	There are certain co-workers that I come into conflict with.	
WR3	A culture of harmonious working relationships is encouraged in my company.	
WR4	Positive working relationships are encouraged in my company.	
WR5	My company treats all groups and individuals equally.	
Career Commitment		
C1	I am happy to develop my career with my company.	Puah & Ananthram (2006)
C2	I believe this career is a great career to work in.	
C3	I would be very happy to spend the rest of my career with the company.	
C4	I enjoy sharing about the work in my company with people outside of it.	
C5	I feel bonded to my company.	
C6	One of the major reasons I continue to work for this company is that another organization may not match the overall career opportunities I have here.	
C7	I am proud to tell others about my career.	
C8	I am not thinking of shifting to another career.	

4. Results

The analysis of the data begins with profiles of the respondents themselves, looking at their years of experience in the industry, job role, age, and where they work in Shanghai's pet retail industry. Of the 138 respondents, 29.71% had between 11-15 years of experience, 26.81% had 6-10 years of experience and 18.12% had 16-20 years of experience, suggesting that the majority are mid-level experienced employees. In relation to the type of work, the largest group in job status are shop assistants (40.6%), then pet beauticians (30.43%), which is indicative of the type of painfully unsustainable frontline services. Those more in specialized or managerial positions, for example pet doctors (18.84%) and store managers (2.9%) were less. Age-range distribution suggested that between 31-40 years was the highest with 31.88%; ideal middle of the career reiterating the need for skill, stability and experience.

The company also had most of its workers centered in Shanghai in the main commercial buildings. Pudong took up 31.88% of the work force and Huangpu, 28.99%. The former are more likely to require a larger number of workers based on the higher flow of customers in these types of business. Quieter communities such as Jing An (4.35%) and Changning (5.8%) also had fewer workers working in the industry. These figures indicate that the amount of pet store employees in Shanghai is reasonably responsive to commercial concentration, and consumer needs.

Reliable indicators for the examined constructs; payment, working conditions, and working relationships as hygiene factors, training and development as a motivational factor, and career commitment is synthesized in [Table 3](#). Loadings, AVE, CR, and Cronbach's Alpha were examined to assess the reliability of the construct. All constructs fulfilled the threshold requirements (AVE > 0.5; CR > 0.7), which indicates acceptable internal consistency and reliability. Of the constructs, Payment (CR=0.915) and Training and Development (CR=0.901) must be underlined as the constructs measured with the higher reliability coefficients, which points to their relevance for explaining employee motivation and commitment. This strengthens the validity of the measurement model and is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which separates between hygiene and motivational factors influencing employees' attitudes ([Herzberg et al., 1959](#)).

Bootstrapping analyses were also conducted for the PLS analysis to investigate the structural relationships between hygiene factors, the motivational factor, and career commitment. The R^2 for career commitment is .256, suggesting that the model explains 25.6% of the variance in career commitment. Even though this value is under the recommended threshold of 0.75 for high predictive power, in exploratory research conducted within the social sciences, R^2 between 0.2 and 0.5 are generally considered acceptable ([Hair et al., 2017](#)). [Table 4](#) provides evidence of discriminant validity, since the AVE for each construct outperforms its correlation with other constructs. Such as for the hygiene factors –payment, working conditions, working relationships- and the motivational factor -training and development -, which can be considered independent constructs from career commitment (AVE of 0.790), associating both with employees' long-term commitment to their career. These results lent credence to the theoretical basis as well as establish the empirical distinctiveness and reliability of the constructs developed within the study to understand workforce motivation among the pet retail industry in Shanghai.

Table 3: Results of Reliability – Loadings, Average Variance Extracted, Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha

Construct	Item	Loadings	AVE	CR	Cronbach’s Alpha
Payment	P1	0.838	0.731	0.915	0.908
	P2	0.893			
	P3	0.854			
	P4	0.865			
	P5	0.825			
Working Conditions	WE1	0.868	0.742	0.831	0.827
	WE2	0.865			
	WE3	0.851			
Training and Development	T1	0.844	0.736	0.888	0.881
	T2	0.882			
	T3	0.839			
	T4	0.866			
Working Relationship	WR1	0.831	0.659	0.887	0.870
	WR2	0.828			
	WR3	0.780			
	WR4	0.749			
	WR5	0.866			
Career Commitment	C1	0.746	0.624	0.924	0.914
	C2	0.817			
	C3	0.746			
	C4	0.820			
	C5	0.805			
	C6	0.836			
	C7	0.757			
	C8	0.790			

Table 4: Discriminant Validity

Construct	Career Commitment	Payment	Training	Work Condition	Work Relation
Career Commit	0.790				
Payment	0.539	0.855			
Training	0.536	0.534	0.858		
Work Condition	0.575	0.469	0.430	0.861	
Work Relation	0.653	0.567	0.512	0.474	0.812

Note: Diagonals represent the square root of the AVE while the off-diagonals represent the correlations

As presented in Table 5, all hypotheses tested refer to direct effects on career commitment. The findings suggest that the hygiene factors, salary, working conditions, and interpersonal relationships at work, as well as the motivational factor, training and development, are direct determinants of employee commitment to their career. Of these, pay, working conditions, training and development all have a large positive effect, while relationships at work all have a medium or non-significant impact. The recognition of well-structured pay systems, positive work environments, and opportunities for training on an ongoing basis as key components of employee commitment is important. Plus,

improved levels of hygiene and motivation can significantly impact job-security as well as fostering a long-term commitment among workers in Shanghai's pet retail industry.

Table 5: Hypothesis Testing

Hypo.	Relationship	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDE V	T Statis	P Values	Decision
H1	Payment -> Career Commitment	0.247	0.250	0.081	3.068	0.002	Supported
H2	Work Condi -> Career Commitment	0.239	0.232	0.097	2.461	0.014	Supported
H3	Training -> Career Commitment	0.344	0.349	0.094	3.657	0.000	Supported
H4	Work Relation -> Career Commitment	0.122	0.113	0.097	2.461	0.210	Not Supported

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

5. Discussion

The findings from hypothesis testing indicate that three of the four hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) are supported, indicating the presence of significant direct effects of hygiene and motivational conditions on employee career commitment in Shanghai's pet retail sector.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) demonstrates a positive association between payment and career commitment. Equitable and clear compensation policies help retain employees that are committed to maintaining a job. Fair financial compensation satisfies basic stage relevant needs and shows respect for one's work, thus creating a feeling of respect and appreciation for the organization (An & Lasi, 2024; Pathak, 2024). Following Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, payment is considered a key element of the hygiene factors, in the sense that it won't cause dissatisfaction and therefore contribute to retaining the person in the organization in the long run (Herzberg et al., 1959; Haiedar & Kholifah, 2025; Ybañez, 2024). Another research also reveals that good wage incentives, and an additional tour bonus of government incentives are significantly related to high level affective commitment of staff (Watung et al., 2021). This means that if pay is perceived as equitable it can foster greater emotional and professional investment in workers, and we know that "if pay is perceived as equitable it can foster greater emotional and professional investment in workers" (Laxmana & Paryontri, 2023; Jalaman & Encarnacion, 2024).

Working conditions have a significant influence on career commitment, thus Hypothesis 2 (H2) is supported. Nice, clean and comfortable working environment can boost morale of employee, decrease the stress level, and increase the productivity works (Kuntari & Bilgah, 2024; Alhafidz, 2023). Workers are more likely to feel more engaged and loyal to jobs, when they are provided with supportive environment, proper working conditions, flexibility and fair treatment of management in the workplace (Kutty et al., 2024; Naeni et al., 2024). This is consistent with prior studies which demonstrated that hygiene factors like safety material cleanliness, and adequate workspace, not only deter dissatisfaction,

but also foster prolonged engagement (Mahmood & Tajuddin, 2024; Jalaman & Encarnacion, 2024).

While H1 supports the direct relationship between training and career commitment (i.e., training leads to greater career commitment), Hypothesis 3 (H3) assumes that training and development have the strongest positive impact on career commitment as a motivational factor. Opportunities for skill development, training on how to provide good customer service and career development can encourage employees to feel a sense of purpose and self-worth (Budiadi et al., 2024; Anisa et al., 2024). Training and development can satisfy the intrinsic needs of employees such as need of achievement and self-actualization, which are necessary to maintain motivational level (Herzberg et al., 1959; Herzberg, 1966; Elagaili et al., 2024; Soegiarto et al., 2024; Baporikar, 2024). And employers who engage in employee training also signal a commitment to a long-term career, which is expected to enhance loyalty and reduce turnover (Raj, 2024; Peccei & Rosenthal, 2001). Skill and technical training programs for workers in the pet retail industry in Shanghai, not only give workers skills and knowledge but also foster confidence and a deeper personal connection with their career track (Elziny & Mohamed Emam 2021).

But Hypothesis 4 (H4) is not supported as it reveals that working relationships have no significant correlation with career commitment. Perhaps that has to do with the individualistic nature of the pet retail business and the need to focus on animal care, rather than interpersonal connections, in the workplace (Yani et al., 2024; Andrukonis et al., 2020). Some workers within this sector can be used to foreground the value of technical proficiency and individual achievement over interacting with others (Ferri et al., 2023; Colley, 2017). These types of jobs also tend to be highly individual and do not require constant interaction or collaboration, such as grooming, pet-handling, or inventory management (Wijaya & Rezeki, 2020; Harmer & Findlay, 2005). In these contexts, dimensions of both personal development and performance as well as independence and task performance might be more motivative salient than social ones (Caja et al., 2024; Brando et al., 2023).

In general, these findings substantiate Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory in the pet retail sector in Shanghai (Ang et al., 2024). Hygiene factors, such as salary and working conditions, support workforce stability and the motivational factor, training and development, are what influence a long-term commitment to their jobs (Herzberg et al., 1959).

6. Conclusion

The direct influences of hygiene and motivational factors on employee career commitment were studied in the pet retail industry in Shanghai. In particular, the study supports that payment, working conditions, training and development foster employees' career commitment whereas no effects emerged for working relationships. These outcomes are in line with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which stated that factors such as fair compensation, or a good working environment, are needed to prevent high turnover rates, but training and development act as a motivator factor will help to retain employees and allow them to grow in the profession (Herzberg et al., 1959).

They show that transparent and performance driven remuneration policies enhance employees' perception of fairness and acknowledgment, and as a result the motivation to

be loyal in their working careers. When offices are safe, well-designed, and pleasant working spaces, overall morale and commitment are improved by reducing stress and enhancing quality of life. Training and development have the highest positive effect of all factors, as it is related to positive intrinsic needs such as the need for achievement and the need for self-improvement that may be fulfilled through skill growth and career advancement. This may be because care work in the pet industry is so individualized and task-based that the individual's worker relationship is more important than the worker-to-worker relationship.

Owners and managers of pet shops should focus on three important issues to increase the level of commitment to career among their employees: 1) install equitable and transparent compensation systems; 2) invest in constructing workspace environments that are safe, well equipped, and centered on the worker; and 3) develop ongoing training programs that provide employees with expertise at technical skills and customer service skills. Though interpersonal dynamics are less significant in this segment, encouraging collaboration, a culture of respect, and open lines of communication can improve overall workplace cohesion and retention. Through addressing these hygiene and motivational factors, businesses can create a more stable, skilled, and committed set of workers for Shanghai's developing pet retail industry to ensure its long-term, sustainable development.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

This research followed UMS Research Ethics Committee guidelines for research and ethical standards. All study materials were submitted for approval prior to data collection. All participants were briefed on the study as well as assured of the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses and were offered informed consent to participate. Respondents were also assured that their participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and they could withdraw from the study at any point with no repercussions.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors report no conflicts of interest related to this research, writing, and publication of this article.

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